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(54) Title: INHALATION DEVICE			
(57) Abstract			
<p>There is provided an inhalation device suitable for dispensing medicament, particularly medicament for use in the treatment of respiratory disorders. The device comprises a body; a medicament carrier, locatable within said body; a mouthpiece, reversibly movable from a storage position wherein said mouthpiece is within the body to an in-use position wherein a portion of the mouthpiece protrudes from the body and wherein the mouthpiece is in communication with the medicament carrier to allow passage of medicament therebetween; and a mouthpiece actuator, rotatable relative to the body, and coupled to the mouthpiece such a first rotation of said mouthpiece actuator moves the mouthpiece towards said storage position and an opposing rotation of the mouthpiece actuator moves the mouthpiece towards said in-use position. The translational path definable by the movement of the mouthpiece from the storage to the in-use position does not bisect the rotational path defined by the rotation of the mouthpiece actuator.</p>			

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Inhalation device

5 The present invention relates to an inhalation device for use in the administration of medicament to a patient. The device has a mouthpiece, which is reversibly retractable from a storage position located inside the body of the device to a dispensing position in which the mouthpiece protrudes from the body of the device.

10 The use of inhalation devices in the administration of medicaments, for example in bronchodilation therapy, is well known. Such devices generally comprise a body or housing within which a medicament container is located. A mouthpiece (or nozzle) is typically provided, wherein 'in use' the mouthpiece communicates with the medicament container to allow passage of medicament from the source 15 to the mouthpiece and thence, to the patient.

20 In a typical dispensing operation the body of the device is held by the patient and the mouthpiece (or nozzle) of the inhalation device is placed in the mouth (or nose) of the patient. The patient inhales, thereby causing transfer of medicament from the medicament container to the interior of the body of the patient.

25 When not in use it is desirable, from a hygiene standpoint, that the mouthpiece is provided with some kind of protective cover. The cover desirably acts both to prevent build-up of dirt on the mouthpiece and to prevent ingress of dirt into the body of the device through the mouthpiece, which might then be subject to inhalation by a patient.

30 It is known to provide the mouthpiece with a protective cap which acts as a protective cover. The cap may either be an entirely separate element or it may be joined to the body of the device in some way. DE-A-3,639,836, for example, describes a device in which the protective cap is mounted on an arm, which is pivotally mounted to the body of the device.

35 As an alternative to the use of a protective cap, one might envisage a device having a mouthpiece which is reversibly retractable from a storage position in

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which the mouthpiece is contained within the body of the device to a dispensing position in which the mouthpiece protrudes from the body of the device. In a device of this type the body of the device itself acts as the protective cover when the mouthpiece is in the storage position. The mouthpiece cover is thus an integral part of inhalation device, avoiding contamination problems of prior art inhalation devices caused by loss of removable mouthpiece covers.

GB-A-2,074,454 describes an inhalation device comprising a tubular body adapted for detachable fitting to an aerosol container. A mouthpiece is provided, which is movable from a storage position to a dispensing position by means of rotation of a cap, which is mounted on the tubular body. The cap and tubular body are provided with openings of similar dimensions. Manual rotation of the cap to bring the openings into register causes the mouthpiece to be moved to the dispensing position in which the mouthpiece protrudes from an opening provided in the cap. Conversely, rotation of the cap by the user to bring the openings out of register causes the mouthpiece to be moved to the storage position in which the mouthpiece is contained within the body of the device.

For efficiency, it is desirable that the manual action of the user, which initiates the mouthpiece actuation does not interfere with the movement of the mouthpiece from the storage to dispensing position (and vice-versa). It is particularly desirable, from a hygiene standpoint, that the mouthpiece does not come into contact with the hands of the user during the mouthpiece actuation process.

The device described in GB-A-2,074,454 requires manual rotation of the cap to move the mouthpiece to the dispensing position in which the mouthpiece protrudes from an opening provided in the cap. It is highly likely that in performing such manual rotation the patient's hands will come into contact with the mouthpiece, thereby either inhibiting its movement or allowing for transfer of dirt or germs from the patient's hands to the mouthpiece.

The Applicants have now devised a device having a mouthpiece which is reversibly retractable from a storage position to an in-use position by manual rotatory action of the patient in an efficient and hygienic manner, thereby

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overcoming the problems associated with the device of GB-A-2,074,454. It is a requirement of this device that the translational path definable by the movement of the mouthpiece from the storage to the in-use position does not bisect the rotational path defined by the rotation of the mouthpiece actuator.

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According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided an inhalation device for dispensing medicament comprising

a body;

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a medicament carrier;

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a mouthpiece, reversibly movable from a storage position wherein said mouthpiece is within said body to an in-use position wherein a portion of the mouthpiece protrudes from the body and wherein the mouthpiece is in communication with said medicament carrier to allow passage of medicament therebetween; and

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a mouthpiece actuator, rotatable relative to the body, and coupled to the mouthpiece such a first rotation of said mouthpiece actuator moves the mouthpiece towards said storage position and an opposing rotation of the mouthpiece actuator moves the mouthpiece towards said in-use position,

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characterised in that the translational path definable by the movement of the mouthpiece from the storage to the in-use position does not bisect the rotational path defined by the rotation of the mouthpiece actuator.

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Herein the term 'mouthpiece' is used in a generic sense to mean an element shaped such as to be insertable into the mouth or nose of a patient for inhalation therethrough.

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In one preferred aspect, the mouthpiece actuator and mouthpiece are coupled by a coupling mechanism. In one particularly preferred aspect, the coupling mechanism comprises a rack and pinion mechanism. In another particularly preferred aspect, the coupling mechanism comprises a hinged lever mechanism.

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In another preferred aspect, the mouthpiece actuator and mouthpiece are directly coupled.

- 5 In one aspect, the medicament carrier is within the body. In another aspect, the medicament carrier is attachable to the exterior of the body.

Preferably, the mouthpiece is comprised of an elastic material.

- 10 Preferably, the mouthpiece is provided with a cover comprised of an elastic material.

Preferably, the inhalation device additionally comprises a curtain arrangement contactable by the mouthpiece on movement of the mouthpiece from the storage to the in-use position. More preferably, the curtain arrangement comprises a plurality of curtains comprised of an elastomeric material.

15 Preferably, the mouthpiece actuator is provided with a safety trigger mechanism to prevent accidental actuation thereof.

- 20 Preferably, at least a portion of the mouthpiece actuator is shaped for ease of grip by the user.

25 Preferably, at least a portion of the mouthpiece actuator has a friction-enhancing coating.

30 Preferably, the device is provided with a dose counter, which indicates the number of doses dispensed from or remaining in the container. More preferably, the dose counter comprises an indexing mechanism actuated by a predetermined movement of the medicament container relative to the body.

Preferably the mouthpiece is actuatable by a sliding thumb motion.

Preferably, the medicament container is an aerosol or a dry-powder container.

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Preferably the mouthpiece actuator is actuatable by one-handed operation.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided the use of an inhalation device provided herein for dispensing medicament.

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Preferred embodiments of the inhalation device according to the present invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

10 Fig. 1a is a sectional side view of a first inhalation device in accord with the present invention, wherein the mouthpiece is in the storage position;

Fig. 1b is a sectional side view of the device of Fig. 1a, wherein the mouthpiece is in the in-use position;

15

Fig. 2a is a perspective view of a second inhalation device herein, wherein the mouthpiece is in the storage position;

20 Fig. 2b is a perspective view of the device of Fig. 2a, wherein the mouthpiece is in the in-use position;

Fig. 3a is a sectional side view of a third inhalation device herein, wherein the mouthpiece is in the storage position;

25 Fig. 3b is a sectional side view of the device of Fig. 3a, wherein the mouthpiece is in the in-use position;

Fig. 4a is a sectional side view of a fourth inhalation device herein, wherein the mouthpiece is in the storage position;

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Fig. 4b is a sectional top view of the device of Fig. 4a; and

Fig. 4c is a sectional top view of the device of Fig. 4a and 4b, wherein the mouthpiece is in the in-use position.

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Figures 1a and 1b shows a first inhalation device herein comprising a body 10 having an end cap 16, wherein the end cap 16 is reversibly attached to the body 10 by a snap fit mechanism 30,32. Within the body 10 there is provided a medicament container 20, and integral therewith a mouthpiece 90. In the storage 5 position the mouthpiece 90 is kept protected from outside contamination by cover 50, which comprises a pairs of elastomeric flaps 52, 54 arranged symmetrically about the mouthpiece 90, forming a hygienic curtain. The integral medicament container 20 and mouthpiece 90 are mounted for translational movement on guide rails 60, 62. An outer face of the medicament container 20 10 is provided with a series of teeth forming a rack 70, which is in communication with first wheel 72 mounted for rotation on the body 10 thereby forming a rack and pinion mechanism. The first wheel 72 also communicates with second wheel 74, which is also mounted for rotation on the body 10. Rotation of the second wheel 74 is rotationally coupled to that of drive lever 76, which protrudes 15 from the body 10 making it user accessible.

Actuation of the device from the storage position (shown in Fig. 1a) to the in-use position (shown in Fig. 1b) is achievable by a user-driven actuation of the drive lever 76. In practice, this can be achieved by a one-handed operation wherein 20 the body 10 of the device is gripped between palm and fingers and the drive lever 76 is rotated by a motion of the thumb. It may be seen that rotation of the device lever 76 results in similar rotation of the second wheel 74 and opposite rotation of the first wheel 72, which engages with the rack 70 on the medicament container thereby driving the integral medicament container 20 and mouthpiece 25 90, upwardly along the guide rails 60, 62 to the in-use position. Ejection of the medicament container 20 from the body 10 is prevented by stops 64, 66.

It may also be seen that on actuation the mouthpiece 90 impacts with, and causes a parting, of the protective curtain arrangement 52, 54. In an improvement herein, the curtains 52, 54 may be provided with a friction cleaning 30 surface or coating such that the mouthpiece is cleaned of any dust particles, dirt etc., when it contacts the curtains. Deactivation of the device is achievable by the reverse rotation of the drive lever 76.

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Figures 2a and 2b show a second inhalation device herein having an actuation mechanism (not shown in detail) similar to that of the device of Figures 1a and 1b. The device comprises a body 110 having a reversibly removable end cap 116. Within the body there is provided an integral medicament cartridge (not visible) and mouthpiece 190. A protective cover 150 is provided to the end cap 116, wherein the cover 150 prevents ingress of dirt and contamination to the mouthpiece 190 within the body 110. The drive lever 76 of the device of Figures 1a and 1b is replaced by a rotationally mounted drive cylinder 176, which has a grooved surface for ease of grip. It may be appreciated that the body 110 is shaped for ease of grip within the palm of a user's hand and the drive cylinder 176 is arranged for ease of rotation by a thumb motion. Actuation of the device is achievable by rotation of the drive cylinder 176 towards the end cap 116, effecting movement of the cover 150 around the rails to allow the mouthpiece to move to its in-use position. Deactivation is achievable by the reverse rotatory movement.

Figures 3a and 3b show a third inhalation device herein comprising a body 210 having a reversibly detachable side position 216, which is shaped for ease of grip. Within the body 210 there is provided a medicament container 220. Also provided is mouthpiece 290, which communicates with the medicament container 220 through a connecting passage 225 when the mouthpiece 290 is in the in-use position. The mouthpiece 290 is mounted on worm 270, such that the worm 270 is rotationally movable therewithin. The worm 270 is provided at the lower end with a worm drive wheel 272, which communicates with a second wheel 274 mounted on the body 210, which second wheel 274 communicates with a motor drive wheel 276. The motor drive wheel 276 is driven by motor 277 powered by battery 278. A user accessible switch 279 is provided for actuation of the motor 278.

Rotation of the mouthpiece 290 is prevented by the presence of stub 292 on the mouthpiece 290. The stub 292, and hence mouthpiece 290, is mounted on movable guide rails 260, 262 having first and second end stops 264, 266 corresponding respectively to the mouthpiece storage and in-use positions. The upper end 266 of the movable guide rail arrangement 260, 262 is attached to a sliding door 250. The sliding door 250 is closed when the mouthpiece 290 is in

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the storage position thereby forming a protective cover. The door 250 is slidably openable in response to actuation of the mouthpiece 290, thereby allowing the mouthpiece 290 to protrude through the door opening.

- 5 Actuation of the device from the storage position (shown in Fig. 3a) to the in-use position (shown in Fig. 3b) is achievable by user actuation of the switch 279. It may be appreciated that the device as a whole is shaped for one-handed operation involving gripping of the end cap 216 by the fingers and thumb actuation of the switch 279. On actuation the motor 277 rotationally drives motor drive wheel 276, in turn causing rotation of the second wheel 274, worm drive wheel 272 and hence worm 270. The upward rotational movement of the worm 270 causes the mouthpiece 290 and stub 292 thereon to be driven upwards along a path defined by the axis of rotation of the worm 270.
- 10 Since the stub 292 is mounted on the guide rail arrangement 260, 262, it may be seen that the upwards movement of the stub 292 causes the shaped guide rails 260, 262 to be driven sideways (from left to right as shown), hence enabling opening of the sliding door 250, which is itself attached to the upper end 266 of the guide rail arrangement 260, 262.
- 15 Deactuation of the device is achievable by a second actuation actuation of the switch 279, which results in the opposite motor-driven rotation of the gear assembly 272, 274, 276 and worm drive 270.
- 20 Figures 4a, 4b and 4c show a fourth inhalation device herein comprising a disk-shaped body 310. At three equally spaced positions on the periphery of the disk-shaped body 310 there are provided actuation pads 360, 362, 364. The pads 360, 362, 364 are shaped for ease of grip by a user. Three equally spaced slits are also provided on the periphery of the body 310 for receipt of actuating pins 314, 316, 318 mounted on the interior of each pad 360, 362, 364, which pins 314, 316, 318 protrude into the body 310. Compression of an actuating pad 360, 362, 364 relative to the body 310 thus results in movement of a pin 314, 316, 318 into the slits, and hence its insertion deeper into the body 310. When so inserted, the pin 314, 316, 318 contacts generally disk-shaped plate 370, which is mounted for rotation within the body 310, causing rotation thereof.
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- 35

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Figure 4c show a device in which pad 360 has been compressed moving pin 314 into the body 310 and into contact with plate 370, which has thus been rotated.

Within the body 310 there is provided a medicament container 320 and integral therewith a mouthpiece 390. The mouthpiece 390 is connected to the generally disk-shaped plate 370 by pivotally mounted arms. Figures 4a, thus shows arm 392 mounted to the plate 370 at pivot point 394, which arm is itself mounted to mouthpiece 390. The arm 392 contacts a triangular cam surface 396 provided on the body 310. When the plate 370 is rotated the contact of the arms 392 with the camming surface results in the arms 392, and hence the mouthpiece 390, being urged upwardly towards a circular opening 312 in the body. In the storage position the opening 312 is closed off by an iris shutter mechanism comprising three shaped doors 350, 352, 354 capable of forming a circular closure. Each of the doors 350, 352 354 is pivotally mounted to the generally disk-shaped plate 370 at pivot points 351, 353 and 355.

The iris closure is generally urged towards the closed position by leaf spring mechanisms 394, 396, 398. The rotation of the pate 370 relative to the body 310 may, thus, be seen to allow for opening and closing of the iris shutter mechanism. Rotation of the plate 370 is initiated by its drivable contact by one or more of the actuating pins 314, 316, 318.

A lock mechanism is further provided, which allows for reversible locking of the device in the 'in-use' (i.e. iris shutter open and mouthpiece protruding) position. The locking mechanism comprises locking arm 340 mounted at a first end at pivot point 342 to the body 310. The second end of the arm is provided with a stub 344, which is mounted for travel on irregular-shaped track 346 provided in the plate 370. As the plate 370 is rotated, the stub 344 moves along the track 346 until it is retainably received by valley 348 in the track 346, which corresponds to the locking position. Unlocking is achieved by further rotation of the plate 370, which allows for release of the stub 344 from the valley 348 in the track 346.

Actuation of the device from the storage position (shown in Figures 4a and 4b) to the in-use position (shown in Figure 4c) is achievable by a user-driven

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compression of one or more of the actuating pads 360, 362, 364. It will be appreciated that such compressive force may be conveniently achieved by a user holding the body 310 of the device in a cupped hand and using the thumb to squeeze down one of the actuating pads 360, 362, 364. Compression of an actuating pad 360, 362, 364 results in an actuating pin 314, 316, 318 being pushed into the body 310 of the device. The actuating pin 314, 316, 318 contacts the plate 370 causing rotation thereof, which rotation in turn results in the opening of the iris shutter mechanism, and ejection of the mouthpiece 390 from the opening 312 thereby revealed in the body 310. The iris shutter and mouthpiece are locked into the 'in use' position by the hereinbefore described locking mechanism. Deactuation is achieved by application of further compressive force to an actuating pad 360, 362, 364 resulting in further insertion of a pin 314, 316, 318 which in turn further rotates the plate 370, and, thus, results in unlocking of the lock mechanism. The plate 370 may then rotate back to its start position under the influence of the spring mechanism 394, 396, 398 which also causes closing of the iris shutter.

The inhalation device herein is suitable for dispensing medicament, particularly for the treatment of respiratory disorders. Appropriate medicaments may thus be selected from, for example, analgesics, e.g., codeine, dihydromorphine, ergotamine, fentanyl or morphine; anginal preparations, e.g., diltiazem; antiallergics, e.g., cromoglycate, ketotifen or nedocromil; antiinfectives e.g., cephalosporins, penicillins, streptomycin, sulphonamides, tetracyclines and pentamidine; antihistamines, e.g., methapyrilene; anti-inflammatories, e.g., beclomethasone dipropionate, fluticasone propionate, flunisolide, budesonide, rofleponide, mometasone furoate or triamcinolone acetonide; antitussives, e.g., noscapine; bronchodilators, e.g., albuterol, salmeterol, ephedrine, adrenaline, fenoterol, formoterol, isoprenaline, metaproterenol, phenylephrine, phenylpropanolamine, pirbuterol, reproterol, rimiterol, terbutaline, isoetharine, tulobuterol, or (-)-4-amino-3,5-dichloro- α -[[[6-[2-(2-pyridinyl)ethoxy] hexyl]methyl] benzenemethanol; diuretics, e.g., amiloride; anticholinergics, e.g., ipratropium, tiotropium, atropine or oxitropium; hormones, e.g., cortisone, hydrocortisone or prednisolone; xanthines, e.g., aminophylline, choline theophyllinate, lysine theophyllinate or theophylline; therapeutic proteins and peptides, e.g., insulin or glucagon. It will be clear to a person skilled in the art that, where appropriate, the

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medicaments may be used in the form of salts, (e.g., as alkali metal or amine salts or as acid addition salts) or as esters (e.g., lower alkyl esters) or as solvates (e.g., hydrates) to optimise the activity and/or stability of the medicament.

5

Preferred medicaments are selected from albuterol, salmeterol, fluticasone propionate and beclomethasone dipropionate and salts or solvates thereof, e.g., the sulphate of albuterol and the xinafoate of salmeterol.

10

Medicaments can also be delivered in combinations. Preferred formulations containing combinations of active ingredients contain salbutamol (e.g., as the free base or the sulphate salt) or salmeterol (e.g., as the xinafoate salt) in combination with an anti-inflammatory steroid such as a beclomethasone ester (e.g., the dipropionate) or a fluticasone ester (e.g., the propionate).

15

It will be understood that the present disclosure is for the purpose of illustration only and the invention extends to modifications, variations and improvements thereto.

20

The application of which this description and claims form part may be used as a basis for priority in respect of any subsequent application. The claims of such subsequent application may be directed to any feature or combination of features described therein. They may take the form of product, method or use claims and may include, by way of example and without limitation, one or more of the following claims:

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CLAIMS:

1. An inhalation device for dispensing medicament comprising
5 a body;
a medicament carrier;
10 a mouthpiece, reversibly movable from a storage position wherein said mouthpiece is within said body to an in-use position wherein a portion of the mouthpiece protrudes from the body and wherein the mouthpiece is in communication with said medicament carrier to allow passage of medicament therebetween; and
15 a mouthpiece actuator, rotatable relative to the body, and coupled to the mouthpiece such a first rotation of said mouthpiece actuator moves the mouthpiece towards said storage position and an opposing rotation of the mouthpiece actuator moves the mouthpiece towards said in-use position,
20 characterised in that the translational path definable by the movement of the mouthpiece from the storage to the in-use position does not bisect the rotational path defined by the rotation of the mouthpiece actuator.
2. An inhalation device according to claim 1, wherein the mouthpiece actuator and mouthpiece are coupled by a coupling mechanism.
25
3. An inhalation device according to claim 2, wherein the coupling mechanism comprises a rack and pinion mechanism.
4. An inhalation device according to claim 2, wherein the coupling mechanism comprises a hinged lever mechanism.
30
5. An inhalation device according to claim 1, wherein the mouthpiece actuator and mouthpiece are directly coupled.
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6. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 5, wherein the medicament carrier is within the body.
7. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 6, wherein the medicament carrier is attachable to the exterior of the body.
5
8. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the mouthpiece is comprised of an elastic material.
9. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 8, wherein the mouthpiece is provided with a cover comprised of an elastic material.
10
10. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 9, additionally comprising a curtain arrangement contactable by the mouthpiece on movement of the mouthpiece from the storage to the in-use position.
15
11. An inhalation device according to claim 10, wherein said curtain arrangement comprises a plurality of curtains comprised of an elastomeric material.
20
12. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 11, wherein the mouthpiece actuator is provided with a safety trigger mechanism to prevent accidental actuation thereof.
13. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 12, wherein at least a portion of the mouthpiece actuator is shaped for ease of grip by the user.
25
14. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 13, wherein at least a portion of the mouthpiece actuator has a friction-enhancing coating.
15. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 14, wherein the medicament container is an aerosol.
30
16. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 14, wherein the medicament container is a dry-powder container.
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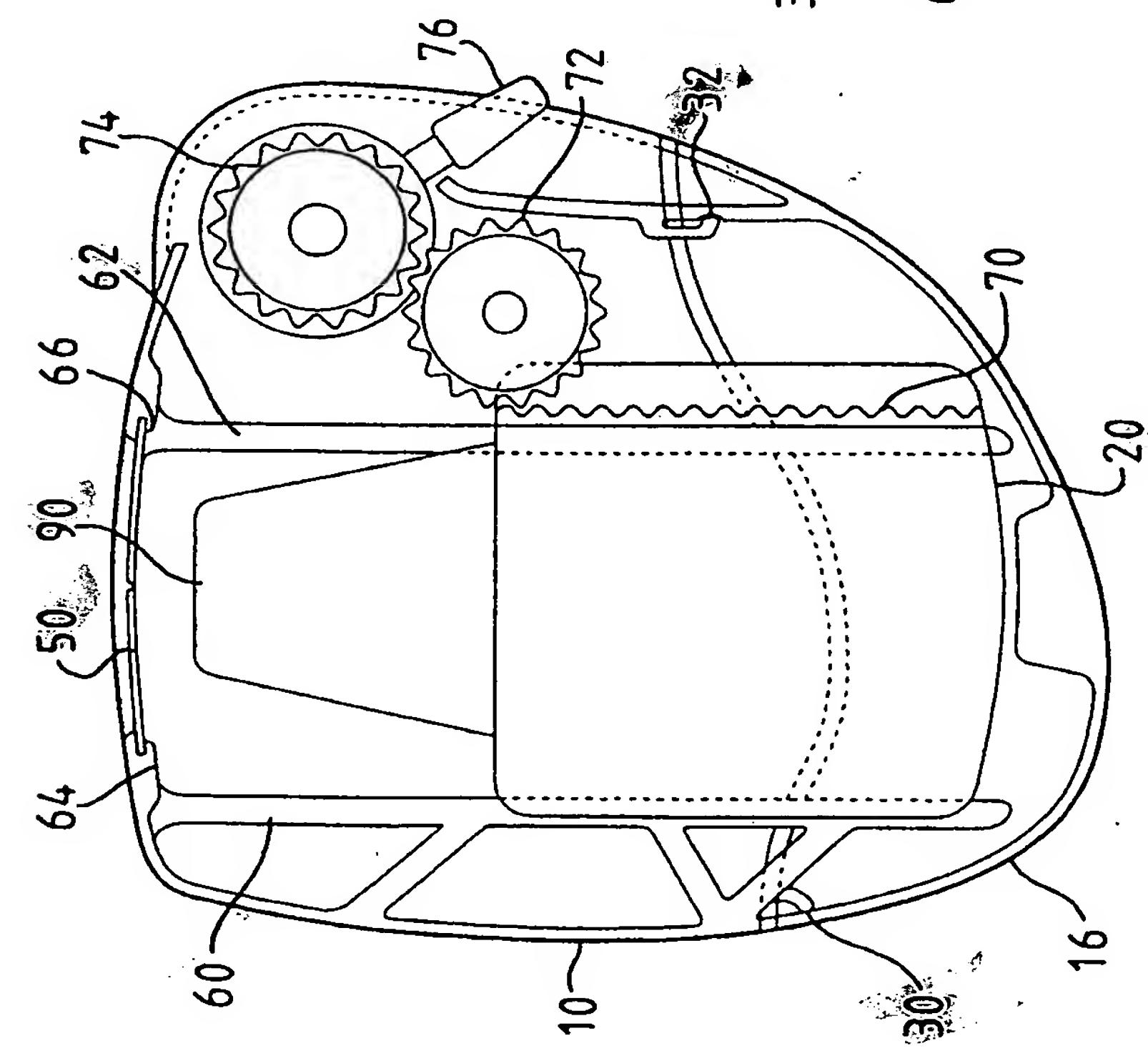
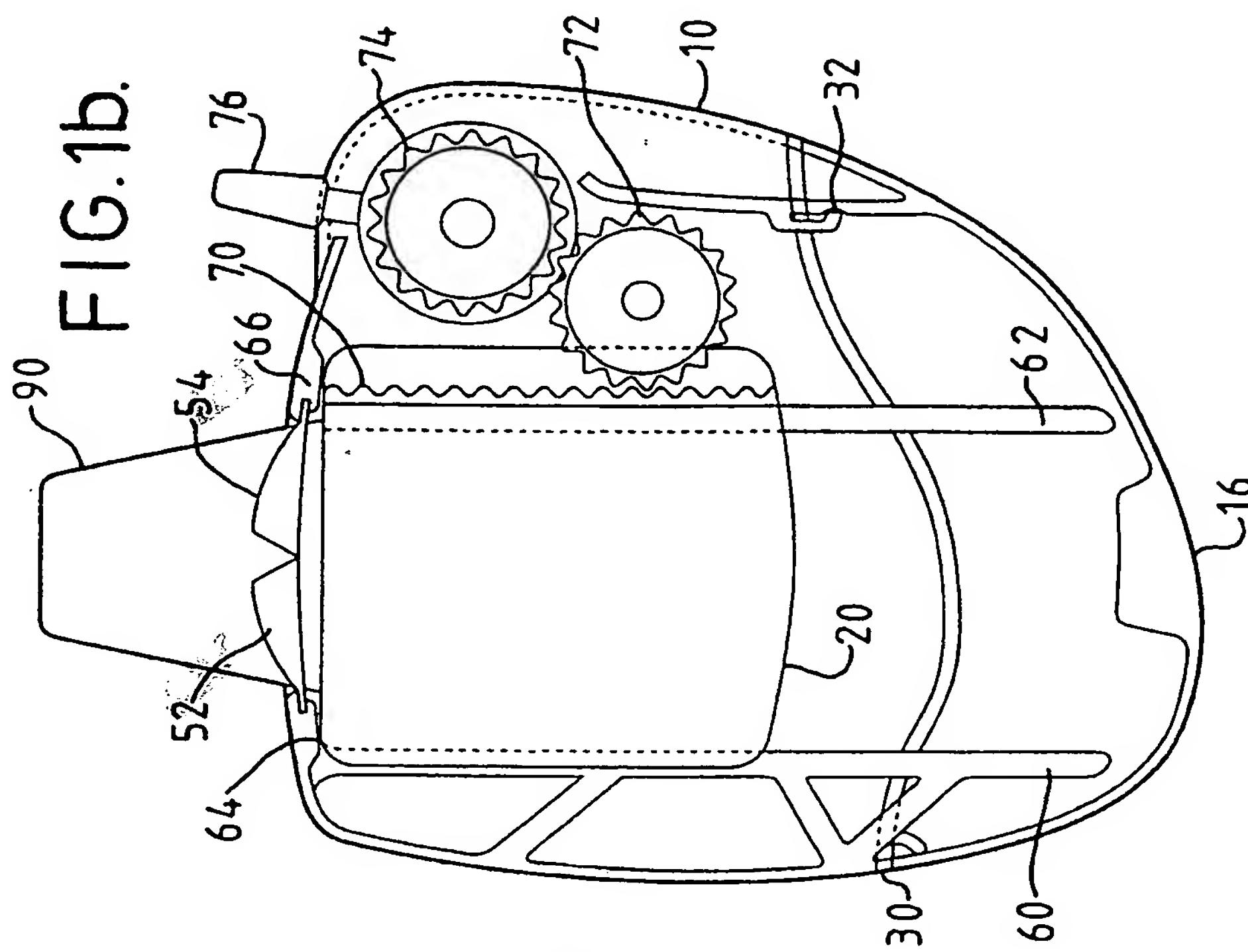
17. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 16, wherein the device is provided with a dose counter.
- 5 18. An inhalation device according to claim 17, wherein the dose counter comprises an indexing mechanism actuated by a predetermined movement of the medicament container relative to the body.
- 10 19. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 18, actuatable by a sliding thumb motion.
20. An inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 19, wherein the mouthpiece actuator is actuatable by one-handed operation.
- 15 21. Use of an inhalation device according to any of claims 1 to 20 for dispensing medicament.

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FIG. 1a.
FIG. 1b.

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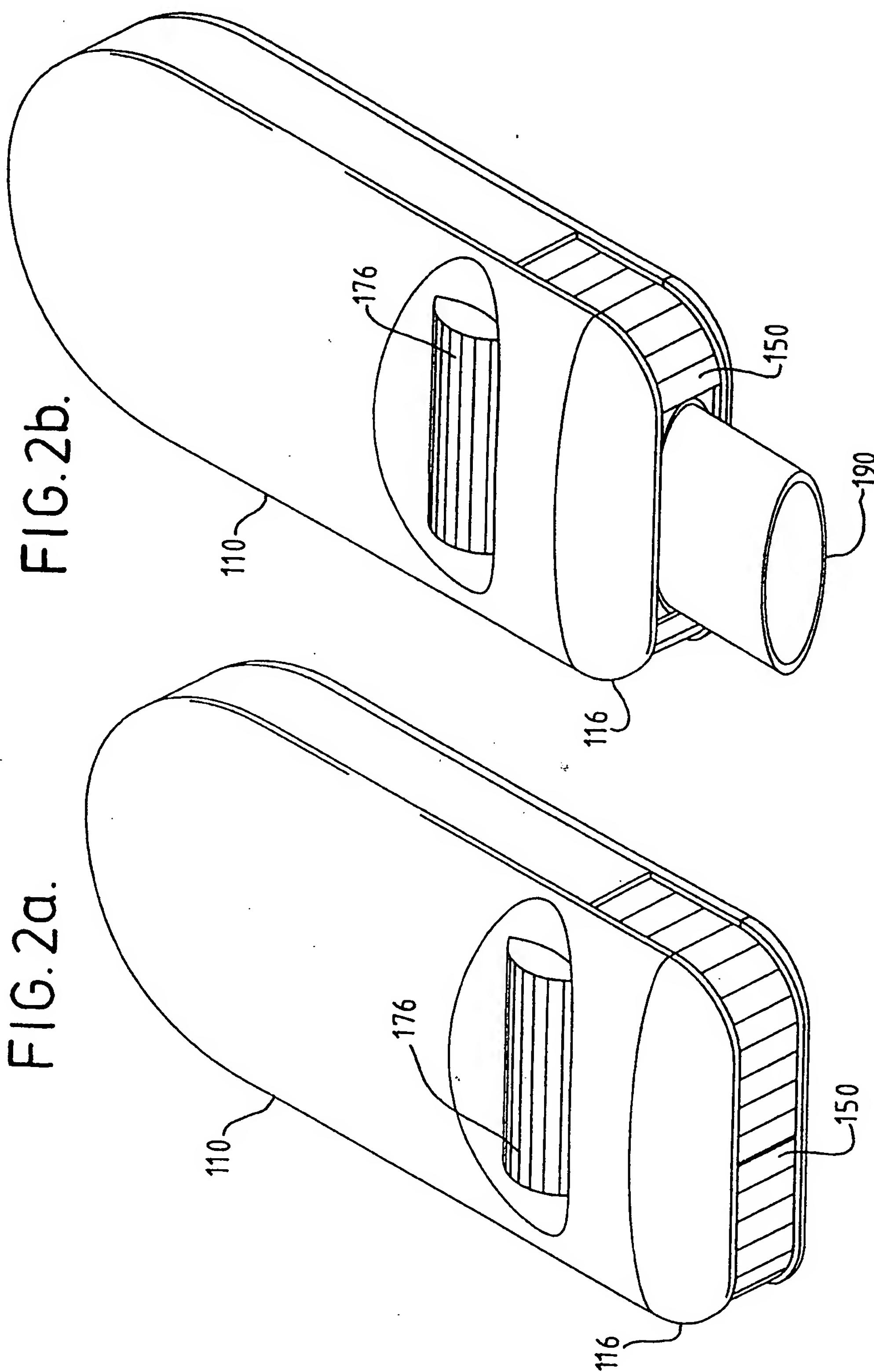
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FIG. 2b.

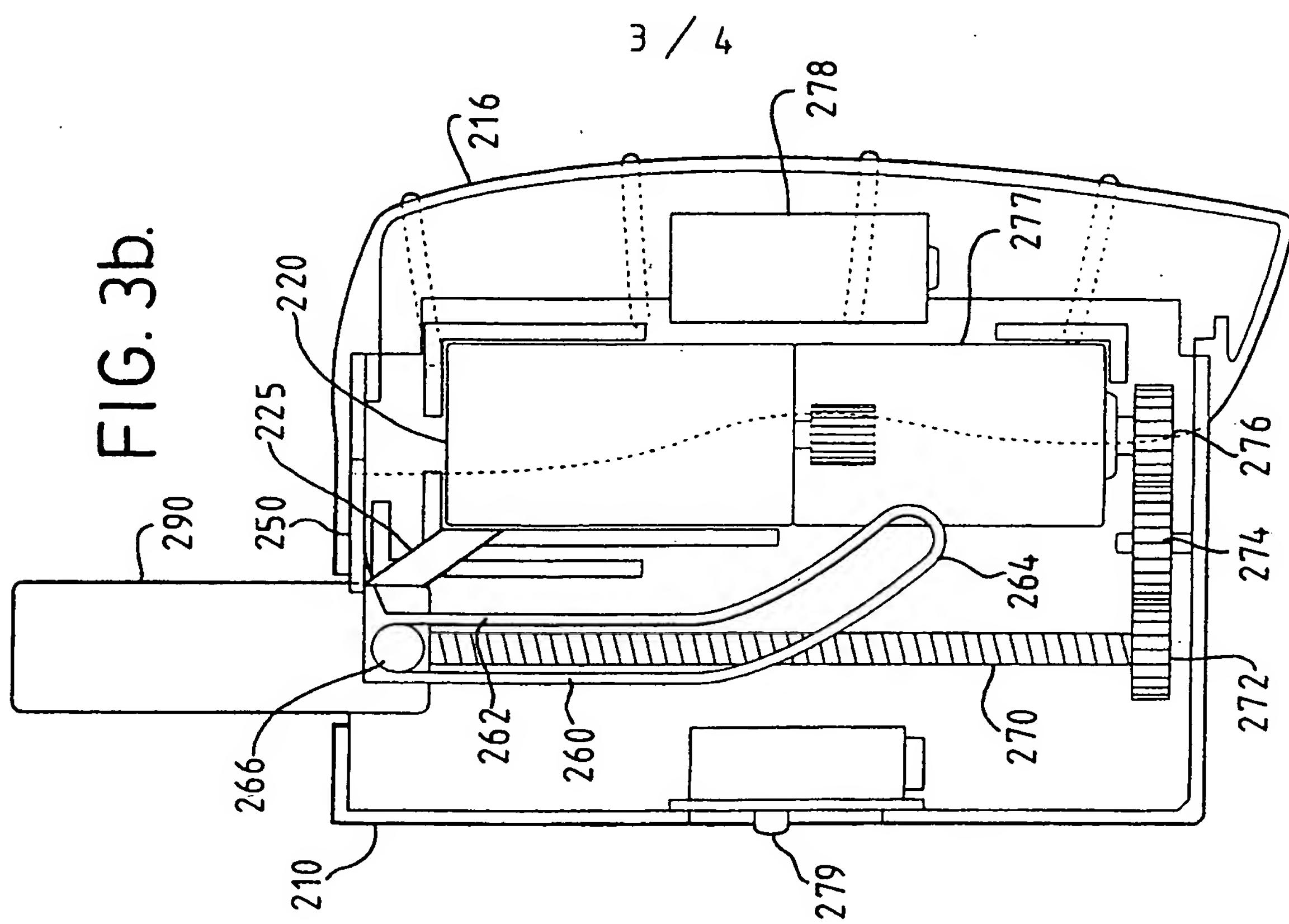
FIG. 2a.



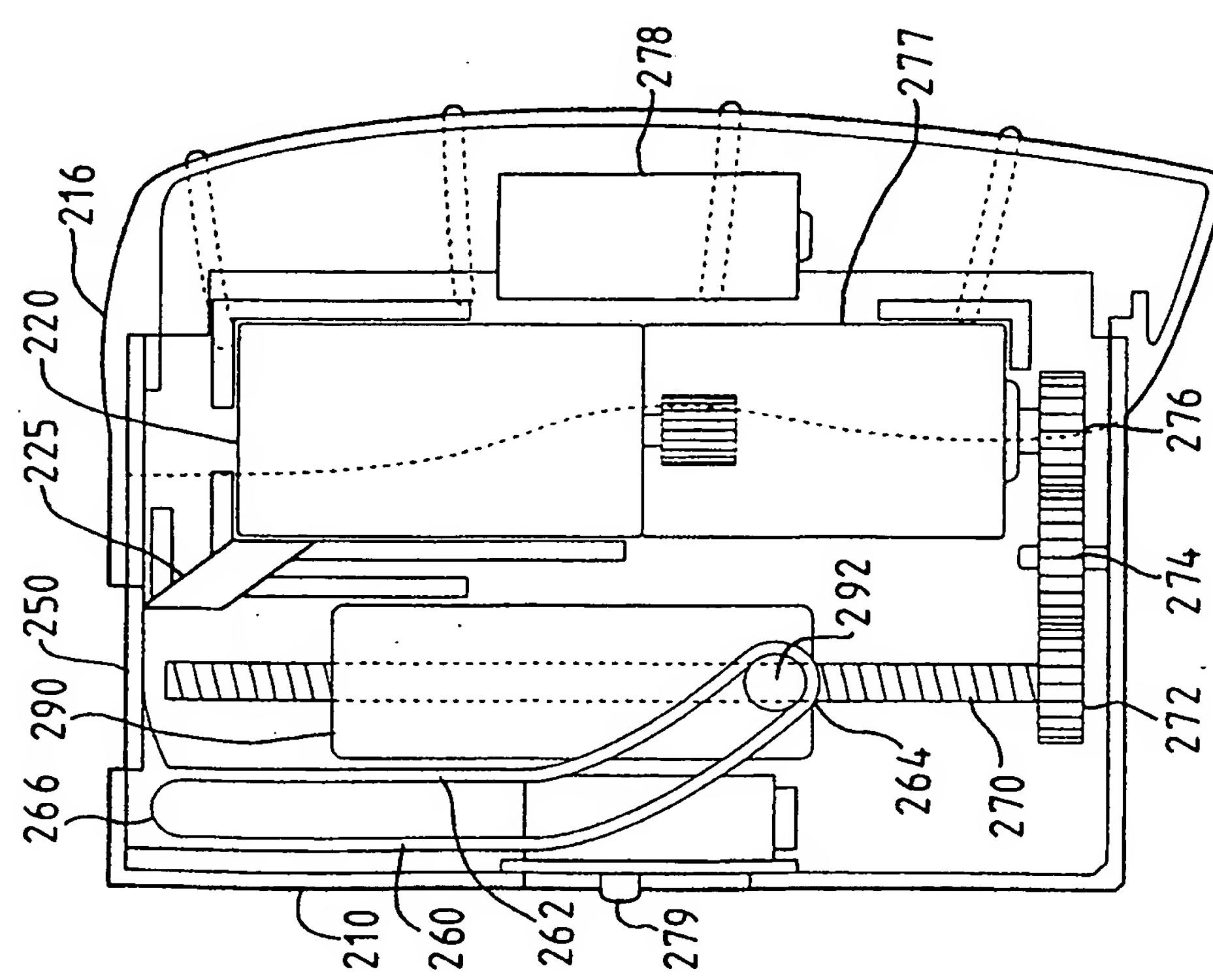
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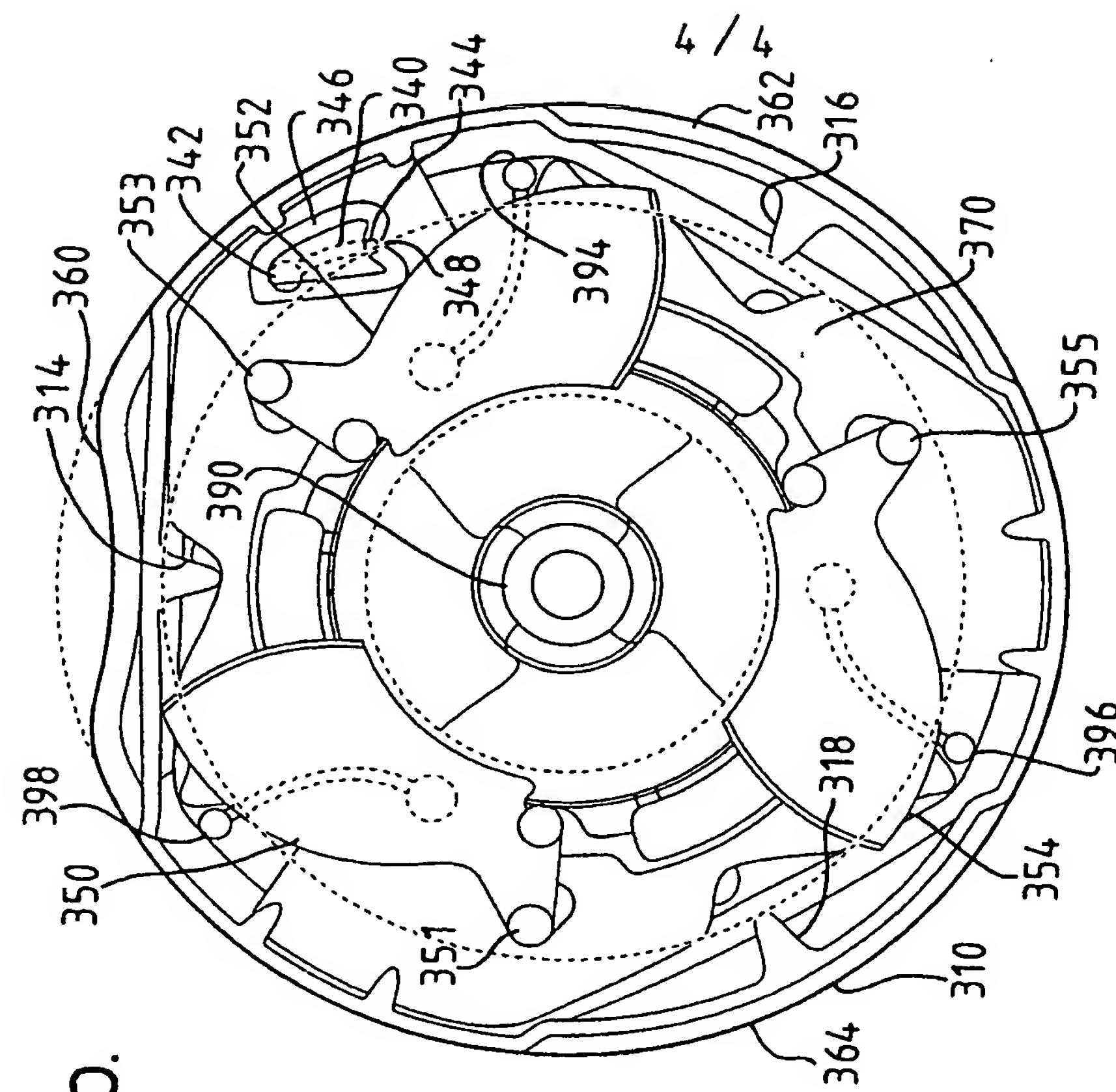


FIG. 4b.

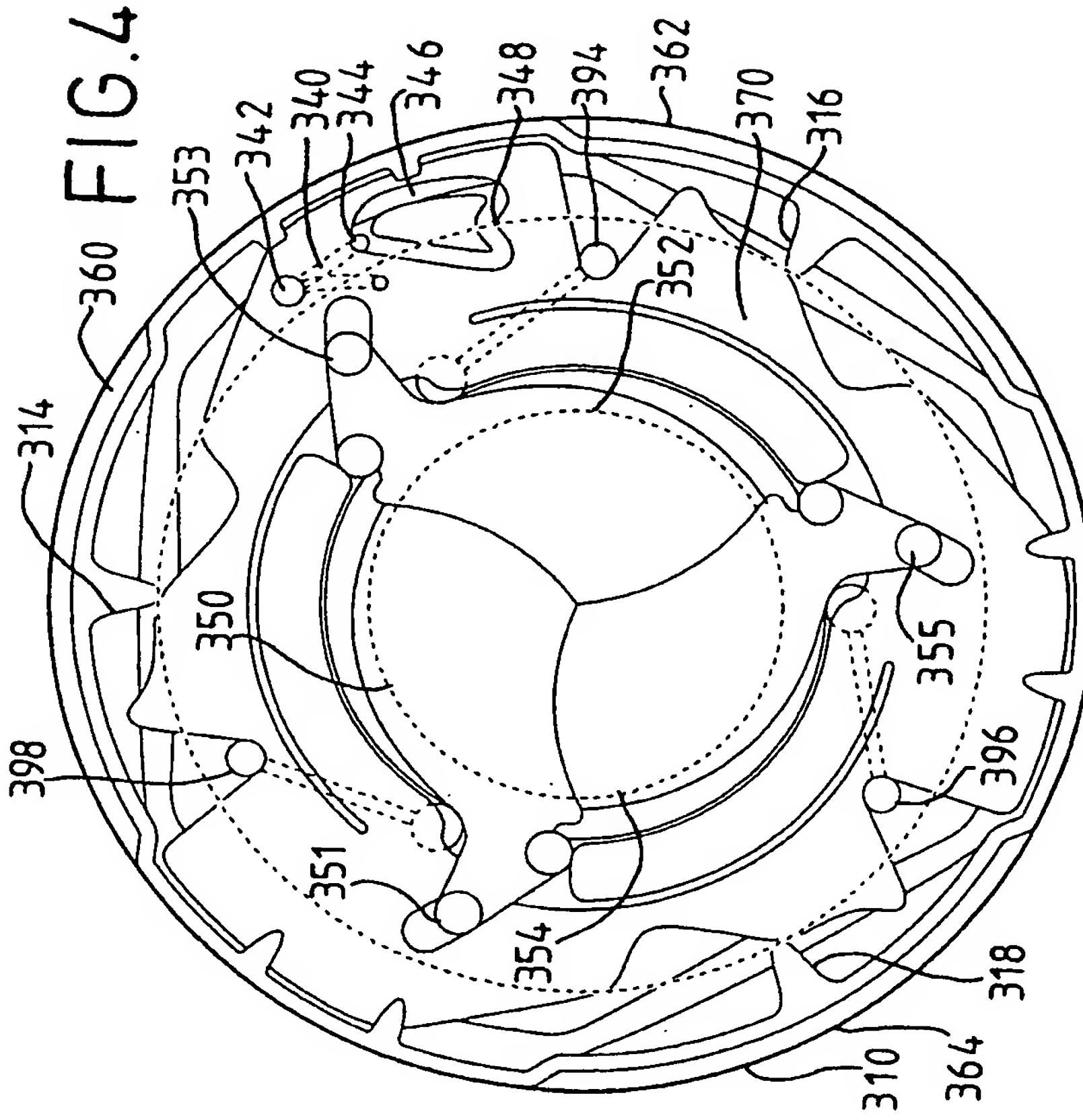


FIG. 4c.

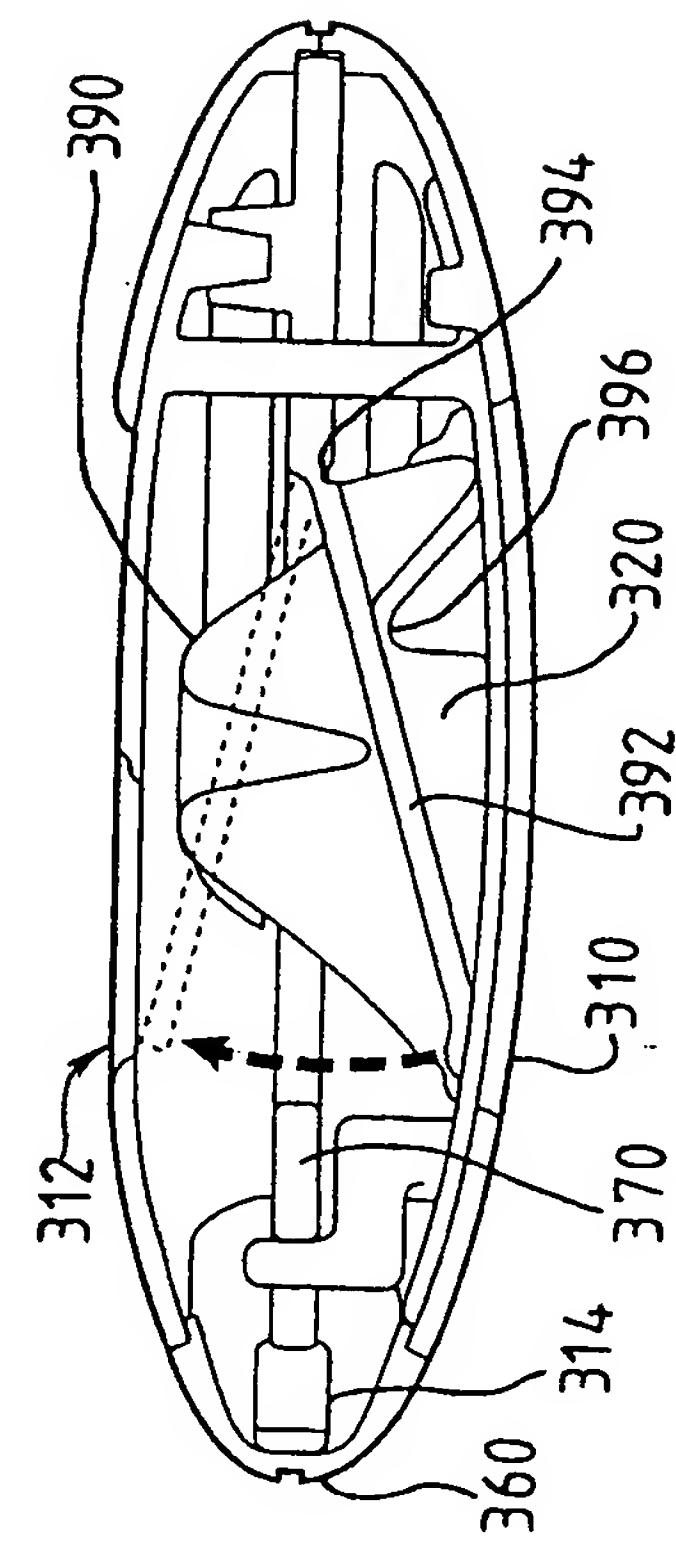


FIG. 4a.

FIG. 4c.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inte... onal Application No
PCT/EP 99/07077

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 A61M15/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 A61M B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	GB 2 074 454 A (SOMOVA SPA) 4 November 1981 (1981-11-04) cited in the application abstract; figures ---	1,2,5,16
A	GB 2 063 075 A (STERWIN AG) 3 June 1981 (1981-06-03) page 2, line 23 - line 29; figures 4,5 ---	1,5,6, 15,17-19
A	US 4 130 116 A (CAVAZZA CLAUDIO) 19 December 1978 (1978-12-19) abstract; figures ---	1
A,P	WO 99 40959 A (IEP GROUP INC) 19 August 1999 (1999-08-19) page 4, line 6 -page 5, line 2; figures 1,2 -----	1

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the International filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search 26 January 2000	Date of mailing of the International search report 02/02/2000
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl. Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Villeneuve, J-M

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

1. national application No.

PCT/EP 99/07077

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.: claim 21
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
Rule 39.1(iv) PCT - Method for treatment of the human or animal body by therapy
2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 99/07077

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date	
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